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VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH VITAL RECORDS OFFICE ASSISTS KATRINA EVACUEES IN OBTAINING BIRTH CERTIFICATES

(RICHMOND, Va.)—When you have lost everything, a birth certificate can be the hardest thing to live without. Securing federal aid, enrolling in school, getting a new driver's license, all of these require proof of identity to move forward. That is why the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Division of Vital Records is doing all it can to assist Hurricane Katrina evacuees who have relocated to Virginia in obtaining a new birth record.

“Our goal is to do all we can in order to help those who have come to Virginia to catch their breath before going back to Louisiana or those who may decide to stay here permanently,” said Janet Rainey, acting director of the VDH Division of Vital Records.

The VDH Division of Vital Records has already helped 21 evacuees who were born in Virginia to begin reestablishing their birth records free of charge. Now, VDH is assisting the Louisiana Vital Records Office to serve those born in Louisiana who have sought refuge in Virginia from the storm damage.

The National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS) has been in contact with vital records staff in Louisiana and has established procedures that states may follow to assist those evacuees residing in their state who were born in Louisiana.

“Even though the Vital Records office in Louisiana is working with minimal staff, they are working hard to serve those persons in need of birth certificates from Louisiana,” said Steven Schwartz, Ph.D., president of NAPHSIS. “We completely support them in this effort and are helping in any way we can.”

Questions on how evacuees in Virginia can obtain Louisiana birth certificates can be directed to Janet Rainey or Linda Whitaker at (804) 662-6200. For more information about obtaining birth, death or marriage certificates in Virginia, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov.

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